

# Above and Beyond:

## Service Accessibility

### Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

*Suggestions for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for ALL people  
to help make your business or service stand out*

#### **Applicable to ALL venues:**

- Train all staff in [People First language](#) and [disability etiquette](#)
- Make sure that all staff are familiar with reasonable accommodations and how to offer them (accessible documents, etc)
- Make sure that all staff have a strong understanding of the ADA requirements and consideration for privacy issues when discussing disabilities
- Have specific plans for emergency evacuation for all people with disabilities
- Make sure staff knows to offer to read materials aloud and offer visual descriptions of amenities on request for people with visual disabilities
- Consider installing an [audio induction loop](#) (hearing loop) in crowded or noisy areas for people who use hearing aid devices
- Provide alternate formats (Braille, Large Print, high contrast) for documents; also make the forms available online in multiple accessible file formats
- In advertising, marketing and outreach media, include positive portrayals of people with disabilities
- Conduct online surveys of members, customers or constituent to get ideas about what accommodations would be helpful
- Make sure all Braille markings in the building are sufficient and accurate
- If entrance doors are large, install automatic or push-button operated entry doors, even when not specifically required by law
- Provide liquid sanitation available at counters
- Make sure seating is available for people who may not be able to stand for long periods of time

- Have [Audio Description](#) and [Captioning](#) available on any video presentations
- Consider having a person on staff who knows basic American Sign Language or have available [Video Remote Interpreting](#) (VRI), even when not required by law
- Go above and beyond the minimum number of [accessible parking spaces](#) required by law
- Make site maps and other visitor documents available in alternate formats (Large Print, high contrast, Braille, electronic format, Smart Phone App)
- Provide a fully accessible Family Restroom for attendants who may be a different gender from the person they accompany
- Have on hand information on accessible public transportation that serves the area
- Highlight the accessibility features in all promotional material for the venue
- If public computers are offered, provide at least one with a screen reader, screen enlargement capability, headphones, trackball (rather than a mouse), word prediction software, etc, if not already required by law for your establishment; also consider offering a Braille printer
- Make sure the facility has adequate indoor temperature control to ensure the safety of people with disabilities which make body temperature regulation difficult
- Adjust timing on elevator doors to ensure that guests who use wheelchairs or have visual disabilities have plenty of time to enter before the doors close
- Post signage requesting a “Fragrance-Free Environment” to protect people with sensory sensitivities
- Install motion sensor lighting in restrooms and other spaces that are not continually occupied
- Consider having at least one public captioned telephone, if not already required by law for your establishment
- On all documents, avoid overly detailed, complicated documents and provide written information in Plain English format

## **Restaurants:**

- Offer menus in Braille, Large Print, other accessible formats, or train staff to offer to read menus to customers with visual disabilities
- Let staff know to offer to read menus to customers with visual impairments
- Keep eye glasses with various increments available for people with minor visual disabilities to view the menu

- When a customer with a service dog visits, offer a bowl of water and dog biscuit; **be sure to ask** the handler first if that is acceptable
- Offer curbside service for To-Go orders to customers with a mobility disability, if not already required by law for your establishment
- Offer assistance to guests with visual disabilities to find the signature line on guest checks
- If a guest does not order anything, it may be due to a disability or a specialized diet; avoid pressing too hard or asking personal questions
- Offer Braille Gift Cards for purchase
- In buffet settings, provide staff to help people who are blind or in wheelchairs to have full access to food service

## **Hotels:**

- Orient guests with visual disabilities to the hotel and surrounding areas (the lobby, their room, exits and emergency exits, in-house restaurant, ATMs, business center, etc)
- For a guest with a visual disability, offer a sighted guide to describe the room's amenities; show them where the emergency exit is in reference to their room; provide information about the thermostat, phone, TV remote control, outlets, Internet access, toiletries, curtain cords, etc
- Show a guest with a service dog the best nearby safe, grassy area with a trash container, and offer potty collection bags
- Offer assistance with self-serve items
- Ensure adequate clearance under the beds in wheelchair accessible rooms (to accommodate Hoyer Lifts or similar devices)
- Arrange amenities such as towels, hangers, irons, toiletries, hairdryers, etc, so that they are easily accessible to a person in a wheelchair
- For a guest who is deaf, offer to turn the remote control to the "CC" closed captioning feature on the room's TV
- If there is no practical accessible transportation that serves the area, offer to call a cab for guests with visual disabilities
- Offer assistance to guests with visual disabilities to find the signature line on guest checks, registration forms, etc
- For rooms that use key cards, have one corner trimmed off so the guest knows which way to put it in the door; also provide a distinctive texture on one side to let user know which side is up

- Leave a hand-held showerhead near the faucet within easy reach for a person with mobility impairments
- Add power strips to ensure that outlets are accessible for a person with a mobility impairment
- As guests check in, ask about allergies (such as allergies to dust); offer to change all bedding – not just sheets – daily if needed
- If refrigerators are not part of the guest room, ask if a guest needs access to refrigeration for medications or for part of a specialized diet
- Provide restrooms with larger-than-required area to accommodate electric wheelchairs
- Install full-length mirrors in or near the restroom
- Avoid high-pile, low density carpeting

### **Recreational Venues:**

- For sites for children with disabilities, install controlled entry and exit with fencing around the entire outdoor perimeter; consider RFID locator wristbands tracked by touch-screen display monitors, public address and emergency notification systems, video surveillance, etc
- On playgrounds and athletic grounds, design with [rubberized surfaces](#)
- Make sure rides and sports sites are fully accessible, with at least some of the equipment specifically designed for people who use wheelchairs, people with mobility impairments, people who are blind, etc, if not already required by law for your establishment
- Make sure that basketball courts, tennis courts, etc, have easy access and can accommodate athletes who use wheelchairs, if not already required by law for your establishment
- Working within legal requirements, find innovative substitutions for chlorine and other chemicals in swimming pools
- Build turn-around paths at trail dead-ends to accommodate a 180-degree turn for people in wheelchairs
- Offer special movie and theater showings with a more gentle sensory experience for children with autism (softer sounds, more lighting, etc)
- Make sure food options are adequately labeled with complete list of ingredients
- Provide more than required companion seats in close proximity to wheelchair seating
- Offer Multi-Sensory exhibits for people who are blind or visually impaired and ASL interpreted tours for people who are deaf

## **Medical Facilities:**

- Ensure that the staff is familiar with accessibility issues for patients specific to examinations and medical procedures
- Make sure that staff members are familiar with the basics of ADA requirements, including familiarity with privacy issues
- If the facility is a complex of hallways, consider mirrors at corners so that people in wheelchairs can see foot traffic at intersections
- Provide bed alarm systems for people with traumatic brain injuries, dementia, or other cognitive disabilities that may mean they could wander off
- Provide comfortable seating for attendants who are with a person with a disability

## **Educational Sites:**

- Evaluate seating in classrooms and auditoriums to be sure that all seating positions are practical and provide full visual access
- Provide an overview of [disability etiquette](#) and confidentiality issues for all students, teachers, lecturers and staff
- Ensure adequate lighting in all classrooms and learning sites
- Provide companion seating next to wheelchair-accessible seating; consider easily removable construction of the companion seating to provide more accessible seating when needed
- For sessions that are offered in a darker room setting (Power Point, video presentations), have American Sign Language interpreters use glow-in-the-dark gloves or have subdued lighting on the interpreter
- Make available an ombudsman specific to disability issues and concerns; make sure contact information for that office is readily available to all

## **Reference Notes:**

- People First Language, from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities:  
<http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/resources/publications/pfanguag.asp>
- Disability Etiquette, from Easter Seals:  
[http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl\\_etiquette](http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_etiquette)
- Hearing Loops, from HearingLoop.org:  
<http://www.hearingloop.org/>

- Audio Description, from American Council of the Blind:  
<http://www.acb.org/adp/ad.html#what>
- Open and Closed Captioning, from National Institutes of Health:  
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/pages/caption.aspx>
- Video Remote Interpreting, from National Association of the Deaf:  
<http://www.nad.org/issues/technology/vri>
- Accessible Parking Spaces, from the Americans with Disabilities Act:  
<http://www.ada.gov/restripe.htm#anchor368983>
- Rubberized surfaces on playgrounds, from the National Center on Accessibility:  
<http://www.ncaonline.org/?q=node/1448>